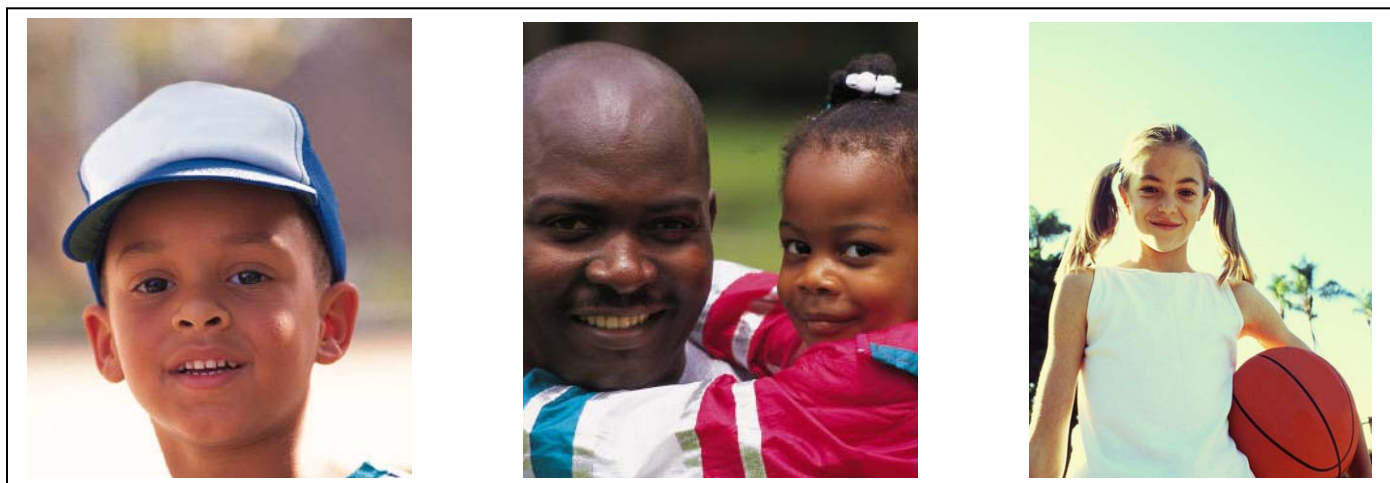


# Finding a Good Fit: Using Job Fit Screening Tools with the Centrally Coordinated Hiring Pool



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# **CCHP and the Job Fit Screening Tool**

## ***The FIA Experience***

The State of Michigan, Family Independence Agency (FIA) has over the last six years developed a comprehensive recruitment and selection process for Children's Protective Services and Foster Care workers. The new process is designed to decrease employee turnover and ensure that the highest-quality candidates are hired. In this effort to implement the best process available, FIA has requested that CPS Human Resource Services (CPS) conduct research on the effectiveness and applicability of a Job Fit screening tool that could be used in the selection process.

FIA has come to recognize the relevance of "job fit" to performance and retention. Most hiring managers realize that creating a good match between a job and a candidate involves not only determining the candidate's knowledge and skill related to the job, but also whether he/she will be a good personal "fit" with the job and the agency. This is especially true for child welfare positions due to the nature of the work with families and children at risk.

Many child welfare agencies suffer from high turnover in the first year of employment, some of which may be caused by employees' poor fit for child welfare work. FIA believes that a substantial number of Children's Protective Services and Foster Care workers "burn out" after a few years on the job, while many others continue to perform well for many years, even to retirement. FIA has observed that those who thrive on the job over the long term appear to have certain personality characteristics that differ from those who burn out after a few years. Characteristics such as "resiliency" and the ability to separate work from one's personal life appear to make a difference in longevity.

Currently, FIA asks Children's Protective Services and Foster Care applicants to complete a "Job Fit Measures" inventory. The inventory provides information about how much time applicants expect to spend on various job activities, and asks them to assess themselves on nineteen behavioral characteristics. (See Attachment 1 for a sample, page 9.) This inventory is not a personality test, and is not used in the applicant screening process, because FIA has found that most applicants simply provide the expected answers to the questions. FIA has asked CPS to help determine if there are job fit personality assessment tools that could be used to help predict both good performance and longevity.

## ***Personality Assessment Testing and the Big Five***

One area of Job Fit testing is personality assessment testing. Personality tests like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the DISC are very popular as development tools and have been used by thousands of employees to help with their leadership, team and/or interpersonal work style. However, when it comes to selecting employees for a job, these tools are often not effective, because they do not do a good job of actually predicting someone's performance. Similarly, tests like the Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) that are more clinically-oriented personality measures designed primarily to diagnose psychopathology should be avoided for selection purposes as it may appear to be a medical examination and subsequently violate the American's with Disability Act (ADA).

For the purposes of this research, we will focus on personality tests based on the Five Factor Model. Throughout the 1980s and continuing through the present, most personality researchers have agreed that the Five Factor Model (commonly referred to as the "Big Five") is the basic paradigm for personality research. The Big Five are bipolar dimensions of personality that have been found to form the taxonomic (and factorial) core of personality models and also capture a lay-persons' description of personality as found in everyday language. The Five Factors are presented in Table 1 (page 3).

**Table 1: The “Big Five” Taxonomy of Personality**

Big Five Factor	Alternate Names	Positive Pole Sample Associated Trait	Negative Pole Sample Associated Trait
<i>Extroversion</i>	Surgency, Assertiveness	Sociable, Gregarious, Assertive, Talkative, Active, Ambitious, Expressive, Energetic, Enthusiastic, Outgoing	Quiet, Reserved, Shy, Retiring, Taciturn, Inhibited
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	Conformity, Dependability	Careful, Thorough, Responsible, Planful, Persevering, Achievement Oriented, Efficient, Self- disciplined, Diligent	Inconsistent, Impulsive, Undisciplined, Unreliable
<i>Emotional Stability</i>	Neuroticism	Calm, Relaxed, Self- Confident, Steady, Easy-going	Anxious, Depressed, Angry, Worried, Insecure, Tense, Vulnerable, High-strung
<i>Agreeableness</i>	Likeability, Friendliness	Courteous, Flexible, Cooperative, Tolerant, Caring, Trusting, Supportive, Altruistic, Sympathetic, Kind, Modest	Spiteful, Self-Centered, Self-Aggrandizing, Hostile, Indifferent, Cold, Coarse, Mean-spirited
<i>Openness to Experience</i>	Culture, Intellectance, Inquiring Intellect	Imaginative, Creative, Curious, Cultured, Sharp- witted, Broad-minded, Inventive, Insightful, Complex	Simple, Concrete, Narrow, Imitative, Unimaginative

*Kierslead, 1998.*

Since the introduction and general acceptance of the Big Five model in the early 1990's, research examining the link between personality and job performances has intensified. Almost a decade of research in academic and applied settings has accumulated supporting the assertion that personality can be reliably measured and is a valid predictor of job performance for most jobs. Evidence from over 200 studies examining the personality-job performance link conclude that at the broadest level, conscientiousness is positively related to job performance across the majority of mainstream job types (Barrich and Mount, 1991; Jett, Jackson and Rothstein, 1991).

## What is personality?

MacKinnon (1944) noted that personality is defined in two ways:

1. Personality refers to “factors” inside people that explain their behavior. These factors include temperaments – genetically controlled dispositions that determine the fundamental pace and mood of a person’s actions (Buss and Plomin, 1975) – and the interpersonal strategies that people have developed to deal with others and find their way in the world. These factors drive people’s social behavior, including their performance in assessment center exercises and their responses to personality questionnaires.
2. Personality refers to a person’s distinctive interpersonal characteristics, especially as described by those who have seen that person in a variety of situations. This aspect of personality is functionally equivalent to a person’s reputation. Because reputation is built on a person’s past behavior and because past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior, this aspect of personality has important practical use.

## Why use personality tests for employment decisions?

During job analysis interviews, if asked what is required for effective performance, candidates typically describe characteristics such as “being a team player,” “remaining calm under pressure,” “being responsive to the client’s needs,” being persistent” and “taking initiative” as crucial for their jobs. These characteristics are precisely what well-constructed measures of normal personality assess. Job analysis instruments are now being developed that focus exclusively on the personality and interpersonal requirements of jobs (Schmit, Guion and Raymark, 1995). These will greatly facilitate the use of personality measures in personnel selection.

A good personality measure will, minimally, have two features:

1. Scores will be reliable over time.
2. There should be credible evidence that scores should predict real world performance.

For a personality measure to predict accurately whether an applicant will perform well in a job, the assessment should be used in conjunction with a structured interview process. Figure 1 (page 5) provides a model for conceptualizing the integration of personality data with a structured interview in determining job fit (Hogan Assessment Systems, 2001).

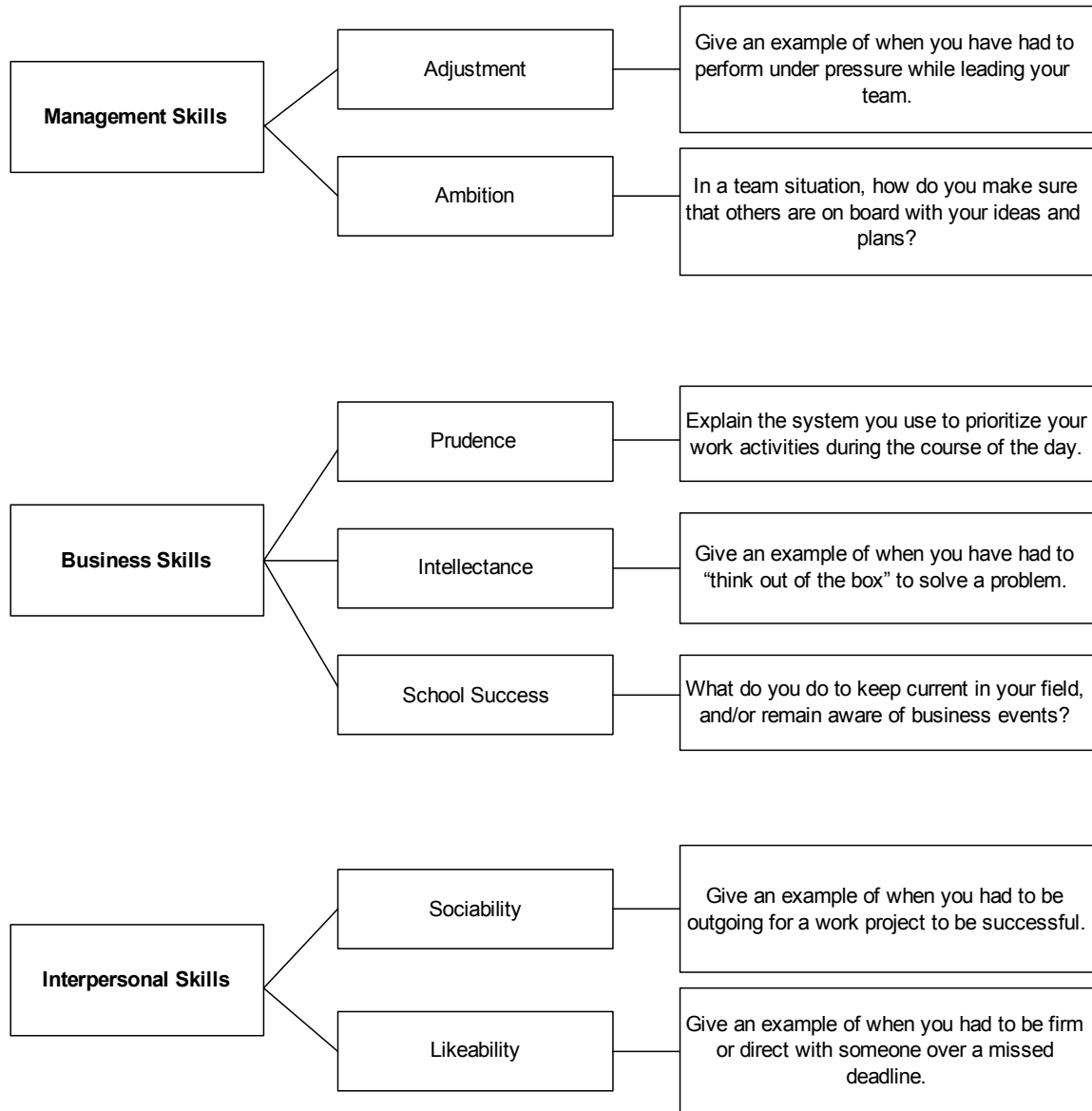
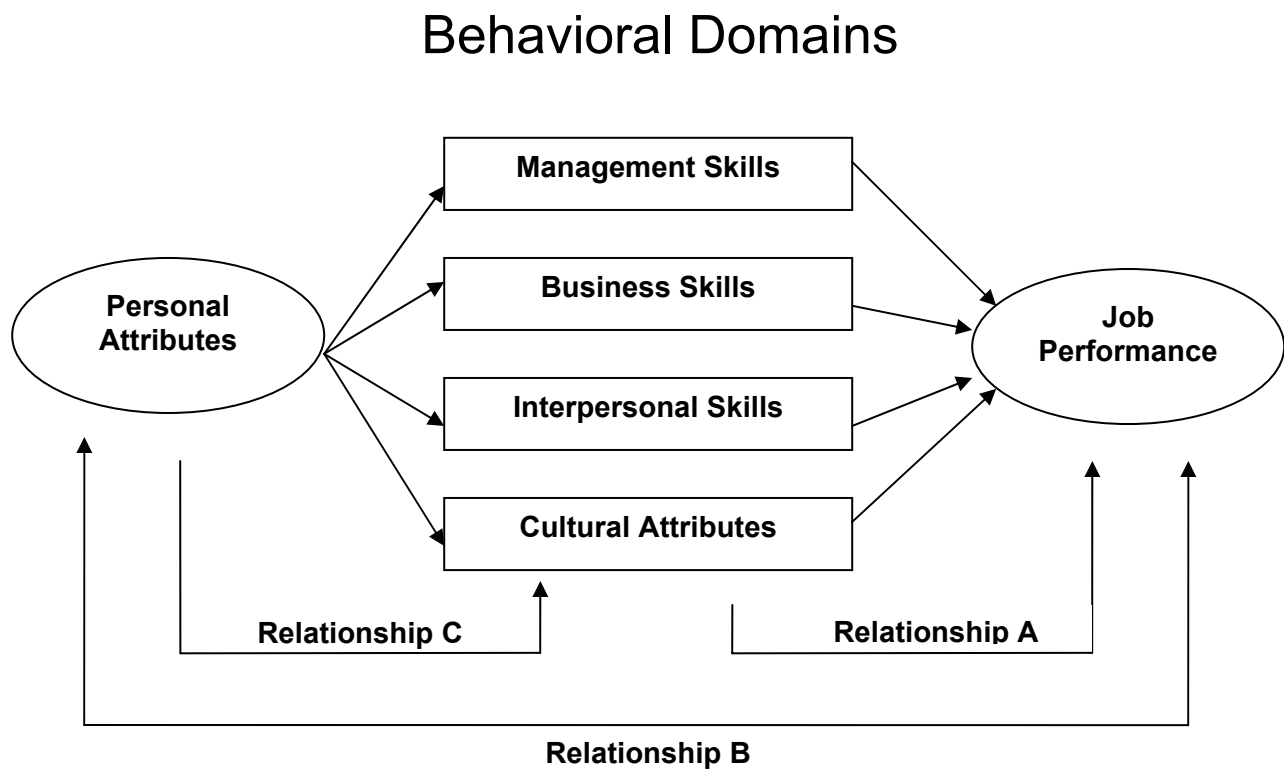
**Figure 1: The Relationship between Personality Data and the Structured Interview**

Figure 2 below illustrates the model for integrating personality data with the structured interview (Hogan Assessment Systems, 2001).

**Figure 2: Model for Integrating Personality Data with Structured Interviewing**



Using this model, the structured interview serves to verify the results of a personality assessment and to determine the impact of personality data on job performance. Implementing this model for a particular job would require a job analysis that demonstrates the importance of personal attributes for job performance.



## Do personality measures discriminate against protected classes of job seekers and violate the Americans with Disabilities Act?

1. There is no evidence that well-constructed personality inventories systematically discriminate against any ethnic or national group (R. Hogan and J. Hogan, 1995). However, to ensure that a personality assessment will not result in an adverse impact for job applicants from any racial or ethnic group, test administrators should ask whether research studies have shown any need for separate racial norms. If separate racial norms have been developed in the studies, this means there are significant differences in the way individuals of different races respond to the questions.
2. Measures of normal personality are not medical examinations and therefore, do not fall under the purview of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
3. Personality assessment service providers should develop profiles using an empirical, data-driven method. This way, hiring decisions can be validated empirically, eliminating concerns about fairness in hiring practices.

## **Recommendations for FIA**

The FIA has conducted a job analysis that produced competencies indicating personal attributes for the child welfare positions. The FIA could use a personality test designed around these competencies that would link the Behavioral Domains to job performance (see Figure 1 for an example).

The FIA has determined 10 competencies for Children's Protective Services and Foster Care workers:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Building Strategic working Relationships | 6. Initiating Action                            |
| 2. Communication                            | 7. Managing work                                |
| 3. Continuous learning                      | 8. Self management                              |
| 4. Customer Service                         | 9. Stress tolerance                             |
| 5. Decision Making                          | 10. Technical/Professional knowledge and skills |

Of the ten competencies, one through nine are behaviorally focused. The use of a personality test based on the Big Five model in the interview process may be very helpful in the selection of successful Children's Protective Services and Foster Care workers.

So much of what makes child welfare workers successful is their behavioral skills, rather than their technical skill sets. In addition, there are specific behavioral skills that correlate directly with the success of child welfare workers. These include, for example, conscientiousness, extroversion and agreeableness. Michigan FIA can utilize personality assessments to assess candidates' proficiencies in these skills to better ensure the success of their child welfare workers once they are hired.

## Summary

The use of personality assessments in personnel selection has increased dramatically in the last ten years and continues to rise. Today's corporations are creating people-focused cultures celebrating individuals' unique talents and abilities. Successful businesses understand that success is all about people. Using personality assessment tools in the selection process not only allows agencies to find better candidates, it enables them to place people in positions where they will truly be at their best.

Integrating the personality assessment tools into the FIA's current recruitment and selection process is worthy of further consideration. Development of a personality profile of successful Children's Protective Services and Foster Care workers will enable FIA to hire not only for job skills, but for job fit as well.

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## **Attachment 1: FIA Job Fit Measures Inventory**

## **JOB FIT MEASURES**

### ***SERVICES SPECIALIST***

There are many different aspects to any job and it is important for an applicant to determine if the position they are applying for will be a good fit with their abilities and interests. The Services Specialist position will be either Foster Care or Children's Protective Services.

Foster Care workers are involved with the placement of children in Foster Care families and with their on going care. The Children's Protective Services position is one of investigation and referral to agency services and the judicial system.

The Job Fit Measures is designed to help you understand the work of the Services Specialist positions. It is a difficult job with many challenges and many rewards. However, many applicants do not understand what they will be asked to do if hired. The following list of Job Fit Measures indicates the tasks a successful candidate will have to perform. Please read these carefully and provide your assessment of how often you believe you will have to engage in the identified task. The information on the amount of time that you believe you will be engaged in the task will be used for research purposes. The task themselves are presented to educate you on the responsibilities of the job, followed by a self-assessment of how well your skills and interests will fit with the job requirements.

Please take the time to complete this form as honestly as possible so you can make an effective assessment of your potential for success in one of the positions.

### **Expectations Measure**

How often will you engage in the following activities as a Service Specialist?

1	2	3	4
Not very often	Seldom	Occasionally	Very often

### **PROTECTIVE SERVICES**

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Conducts risk assessment; i.e. evaluate conditions and risks to child in the home on basis of child abuse and/or neglect complaints. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Develop a case plan; i.e. determine appropriate methods and plans of action based upon investigation findings.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Obtain a court order to remove child from an extreme condition.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Testify in court and defend actions under vigorous cross-examination.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Interact with court personnel outside the courtroom; i.e. file petitions, phone call, and meetings.                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Manage large caseloads of at risk children.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. Interact with angry, aggressive, hostile, and emotional individuals.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

8. Spend time interacting with children.	1	2	3	4
9. Using a computer to enter information, accessing records, and completing paperwork or forms.	1	2	3	4
10. Spend time on the phone coordinating with other service agencies.	1	2	3	4
11. Counseling family members.	1	2	3	4
12. Assess physically injured children.	1	2	3	4
13. Work with other service providers; e.g. therapists, schools, doctors, and hospital staff.	1	2	3	4
14. Participate in meetings with coworkers.	1	2	3	4
15. Transport families to and from needed appointments at service agencies.	1	2	3	4
16. Negotiate and mediate with law officials regarding what is in the best interest of the family.	1	2	3	4
17. Work unpredictable hours including weekends and on-call shifts.	1	2	3	4
18. Prioritize and compose written reports under deadlines while dealing with pending cases and organizational matters.	1	2	3	4
19. Diffuse escalated situations when dealing with angered clients.	1	2	3	4
20. Work with a diverse group of people.	1	2	3	4

## **FOSTER CARE**

21. Recruit new foster parents.	1	2	3	4
22. Train new foster parents.	1	2	3	4
23. Evaluate parenting skills of birth parents or foster parents.	1	2	3	4
24. Develop a plan for the child; i.e. decide if parental rights should be terminated or if family can achieve reunification.	1	2	3	4
25. Counseling family members.	1	2	3	4
26. Follow up visits with foster family and child to assess progress.	1	2	3	4
27. Manage large caseloads of at-risk children.	1	2	3	4

28. Provide help to abusive or neglectful parents in order to reunite families.	1	2	3	4
29. Testify in court and defend actions under vigorous cross-examination.	1	2	3	4
30. Using a computer to enter information, accessing records, and completing paperwork or forms.	1	2	3	4
31. Spend time on the phone coordinating with other service agencies.	1	2	3	4
32. Assess physically injured children.	1	2	3	4
33. Work with other service providers; e.g. therapists, schools, doctors, and hospital staff.	1	2	3	4
34. Participate in meetings with coworkers.	1	2	3	4
35. Transport families to and from needed appointments at service agencies.	1	2	3	4
36. Process payments for foster parents using a computer.	1	2	3	4
37. Negotiate and mediate with law officials regarding what is in the best interest of the family.	1	2	3	4
38. Prioritize and compose written reports under deadlines while dealing with pending cases and organizational matters.	1	2	3	4
39. Work unpredictable hours including weekends and on-call shifts.	1	2	3	4
40. Diffuse escalated situations when dealing with angered clients.	1	2	3	4
41. Work with a diverse group of people.	1	2	3	4

## Self-Assessment of Job Fit

**Rate each behavior on how characteristic it is of you.**

	1 Very uncharacteristic of me	2 Mostly uncharacteristic of me	3 Mostly characteristic of me	4 Very characteristic of me
1. High adaptability			1	2 3 4
2. Strong decision-making skills			1	2 3 4
3. Highly organized.			1	2 3 4
4. Consistently apply policies and procedures.			1	2 3 4
5. Pay attention to detail.			1	2 3 4
6. Remain calm in highly stressful and/or emotional situations.			1	2 3 4
7. Take advantage of learning opportunities.			1	2 3 4
8. Proactive.			1	2 3 4
9. Multi-task efficiently.			1	2 3 4
10. Strong communicator.			1	2 3 4
11. Handle emotional situations.			1	2 3 4
12. Able to work with individuals of different cultural backgrounds.			1	2 3 4
13. Able to meet deadlines.			1	2 3 4
14. Effective networkers.			1	2 3 4
15. Good listener.			1	2 3 4
16. Good problem solver.			1	2 3 4
17. Assertive.			1	2 3 4
18. Independent worker.			1	2 3 4
19. Provide quality customer service.			1	2 3 4

Thank you! Please be sure to include this document in your application package.